

Zero-zero

COMIX!

#20



©'97
G.O.H.



Fantagraphics Books

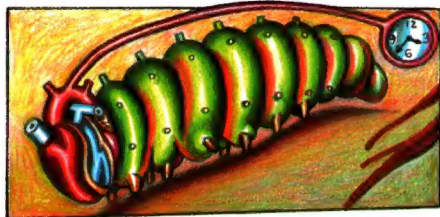
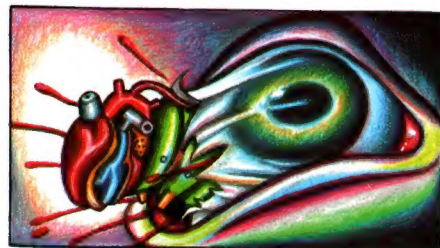
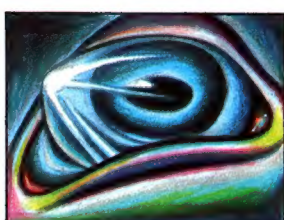
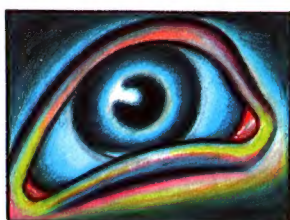
Sept. — Oct. 1997

\$ 3.95 U.S.A. \$ 5.50 CAN.

B l o o d n A P



M.P.
Jacobs
©97



continued on inside back cover

Zero Zero

Issue #20, September/October, 1997 • Edited by Kim Thompson • Art Direction by Brad Angell

Greetings and Salutations, Dear Double-Negative Readers,

Firstly I would like to apologize to everyone who has tried to contact me in the last several months, including cartoonists (whose submissions are piling up on the floor of my office) and letter writers (who have sent me many thoughtful and heartening missives, many of which deserved a reply). There are very good and complex explanations for the decrepit nature of my communicative endeavors lately, although they all boil down to: "I suck and I'm sorry." So if you're a cartoonist who's submitted work and haven't heard back from me, don't hesitate to call me up and badger me. (One reason I've been dodging submissions is, quite frankly, the next few issues of ZERO ZERO are completely full-up and even if I dug something out of the slushpile I liked, it wouldn't see print until next Fall.) But if anyone wants to drop me a note via e-mail — cartoonists questioning or submitting, readers congratulating, inquiring, or complaining — my new e-mail address is kimt@fantagraphics.com. I promise I'll answer any e-mail within two working days.

We are pleased and delighted to be presenting the final chapter of "CRUMPLE" by Dave Cooper (page 3), which we've just heard will be excerpted in the Spring 1998 issue of MS. MAGAZINE. Just kidding. Ha ha. Still and all, we think Mr. Cooper deserves a big round of applause, at least from all of us testicle-bearing human beans, for daring to expose the sordid truth about the relationship between the sexes; namely that *we men fear and loathe women as much as you may fear even more!* (Note to my loving wife: I'm only kidding about this. This is just my "say-something-outrageous" editorial persona. Women are great and I don't even know it. Honest.) Assuming he doesn't let his days strung up from a lamppost by irate feminists, the prolific Mr. Cooper will be seen again starting this coming January with his five-part story "Dan and Larry in Dark Horse Presents; his work can also be glimpsed on the back cover of the all-new Eros Comix graphic novel anthology *Dirty Stories*.

Hail Al Columbia, whose "AMNESIA" begins on page 17! This is the third of Mr. Columbia's astounding two-color strips (earlier ones appeared in #4 and #16, collectors please note). The estimable Mr. Columbia has kept himself busy of late applying color to the eagerly anticipated full-color *Sof Boy* comic due later this year from Drawn & Quarterly (Chris Oliveros, call your accountant now!), and will soon begin work on his own first full-color comic. Can you imagine anything finer? We sure can't!

We are pleased to welcome back Glenn Head with "MAXWELL AND THE MECHANICAL BRIDES" (page 25), his first major new story since the second issue of *Guttervine*. Mr. Head gets a special badge of honor here at ZZ, since it was his exemplary work with *Snake Eyes* that first led us to the crazy belief that perhaps it was possible to nurture an ongoing anthology in this wacky market. (Mr. Head even helped us launch *Zero Zero*, lo, these many years ago, by providing the back cover.)

"POP. 666" by those fun-loving Latin lunatics Francesca Ghermandi and Massimo Semerano, continues with a brief but pungent second chapter on

page 32. (Chapter 3, scheduled for an issue or two down the road, returns to a meatier length, never fear.) Some of you may be rubbing your eyes and experiencing a sense of déjà vu: "Have I seen this story before?" As a matter of fact, Mr. David Mazzucchelli printed this very same chapter in an issue of his luminous *Rubber Blanket* anthology (since sold out); in the interests of plot continuity, we thought it advisable to re-present that particular episode at this juncture — and in the process, we re-translated it pretty much from scratch, although we admit we went back to Mr. Mazzucchelli's most capable first translation whenever we got stuck.

Mack White returns with another chapter of "HOMUNCULUS," entitled "Gladiator," on page 36. Even as we type these words, we are gazing with fond rapture at Mr. White's spectacular cover for *Zero Zero* #22, in which he will cough up a double-length "Homunculus" chapter that introduces a new, four-legged character. True story: At this last San Diego Comic Con, a distinguished-looking gentleman perused the entire Fantagraphics booth and inventory until he'd finally winnowed down his desires to a single comic. That comic was Mr. White's *Villa of the Mysteries* #2. And that distinguished gentleman was none other than Moebius. In case Mr. Moebius is reading this — yes, there will be a third issue of *Villa of the Mysteries* out in 1998, so start saving your *centimes*.

This issue's inside covers are being used to showcase another strip by M.L. Teague, man of mystery and intrigue, about whom little is known.

On our back cover, we're inordinately privileged to present the first American appearance of the legendary French cartoonist Mr. Lewis Trondheim — the first of several such elegant and humorous cartooning efforts to be showcased in *Zero Zero*. (Note: This particular strip originally appeared in the excellent French sci-fi comic *Fleude*.) For those who develop a Trondheim Jones based on this brief exposure, Fantagraphics will be releasing a full-color Tintin-format graphic album titled "Harum Scarum" in December, featuring Mr. Trondheim's funny-animal character McCony and his cadre of wacky friends. If you dig Trondheim's work, check out *The Comics Journal* #201 which will include a feature-length article on the subject. (For a good laugh, you can also check out *The Comics Journal* #199, which features a rather windy review of *Zero Zero* by one of those *Comics Journal* reviewers who gets all bent out of shape if every last strip doesn't resonate with Weight and Importance and Literary Merit and seem to be aiming for a Pulitzer Prize. He should go masturbate over his copy of *Mao* and leave decent hardworking funnybook scribblers alone, but what're you gonna do?)

Next issue will be extra special treat: We're debuting the latest *Zero Zero* serial, a 130-page *chef d'oeuvre* by Kim Deitch entitled "The Search for Smilin' Ed" — and, conscious of the complaints we've received for stringing readers out beyond our readers' patience, we're going to cram all 130 pages of it into a mere five issues — starting with a full 48-page chapter! (Making it the biggest single dose of original Deitch ever presented in one fell swoop, acing out RAW's classic presentation of "The Boulevard of Broken Dreams" a decade or so ago.) Speaking of those serial complainers, Richard Sala's *The Chuckling Whatsit* will be released later this month as a neat little 200-page volume, with a slew of additional illustrations and goodies. Don't miss it!

— THE EDITORS

Zero Zero #20, September/October 1997. *Zero Zero* (ISSN: 1080-5923) is published bi-monthly by Fantagraphics Books. All art and stories are © 1997 their respective writers and artists: Al Columbia, Dave Cooper, Francesca Ghermandi and Massimo Semerano, Glenn Head, M.L. Teague, Lewis Trondheim, and Mack White. Cover © 1997 Glenn Head. Color separations by Chris Brownrigg. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books or the creators. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and institutions in *Zero Zero* and those of any living or dead persons is intended, and any such similarity that may exist is purely coincidental, with the exception of biographical and autobiographical material and for purposes of satire. Letters to *Zero Zero* become the property of the magazine and are assumed for publication in whole or in part, and may therefore be used for these purposes. First printing: Sept. 1997. Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way Northeast, Seattle, WA, 98115. PRINTED IN CANADA.

THE zERO zERO BOOKSHELF

Rick Altergott: DOOFUS #1-2:

New issue just released! Disgusting stories featuring the pantie-sniffing Doofus, bizarre Wally-Wood-on-acid art. Don't miss! \$2.95 (#1), \$3.50 (#2)

Max Andersson: *PEXT*: Original 72-page graphic novel from this Swedish master of the macabre. \$11.95

Dave Collier: *COLLIER'S #1-3*: All three issues still available. Issue #3, the true story of fake-Native American "Grey Owl," is especially impressive. \$2.75 (#1-2), \$3.50

Al Columbia: *THE BIOLOGIC SHOW #0-1*: Nightmares will haunt you after you read these lovingly-delineated perversions. "Pim and Francie" appear in both issues. Hall Columbia! \$2.95 each

Dave Cooper: *SUCKLE: THE STATUS OF BASIL*: Cooper's first graphic novel is a surreal travelogue through a nightmare cartoon universe. Nominated as "Best Original Graphic Novel" of 1996, deservedly so. \$14.95

Dave Cooper: *PRESSED TONGUE #1-3*: A mini-series about a depraved landlord and his bizarre tenants; Cooper's last work before *Suckle*. \$2.95 each

Kim Deitch: *ALL-WALDO COMICS AND A SHROUD FOR WALDO*: The cat came back in these two paperbacks (the first a collection of vintage underground stories, the second a collection of the '80s L.A. Reader serial). \$7.95

Kim Deitch: *BEYOND THE PALE*: 144 pages of weird and woolly comix from the birth of the undergrounds through the end of *Weird*. \$14.95

Kim Deitch: *WALDOWORLD #1-3*: The latest graphic novel from Deitch, starring his calculatin' cartoon cat. \$2.50 each

Mike Diana: *THE WORST OF BOILED ANGEL*: They threw his ass in jail over this. The least you can do is buy it. Very offensive. \$16.95

Bill Griffith: *ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?*: 128 pages of all-original Griffith stuff — this is not the underground comix, nor the syndicated strips. \$12.95

Bill Griffith: *ZIPZY QUARTERLY #11-16*: Keep up with the pinhead! Each issue features over 100 dailies and a dozen Sundays in full color. \$3.95 each

Bill Griffith: *ZIPPY'S HOUSE OF FUN*: Full-color! Hardcover! Signed and limited to 2,000 copies! 216 Sunday strips shot from the original negatives! A coffee-table Zippy book if ever there was one. \$39.95

Glenn Head: *GUTTERSNIPE #1-2*: Urban angst and guerrilla cartooning from a NYC punk. \$3.50 (#1), \$3.95 (#2)

Glenn Head: *AVENUE D*: The best of Head's early work. \$2.95

Sam Henderson: *HUMOR CAN BE FUNNY*: Collects Henderson's *Magie* *Whole* comics and gags. So funny you'll shit. \$14.95

Sam Henderson: *OH THAT MONROE!*: Henderson's everyman loser. Includes the classic "Night of 1,000 Assholes," many more stories. \$6.95

Kaz: *UNDERWORLD VOL. 1-2*: Each volume includes a year and a half's worth of this post-Popeye pulp story. \$9.95 each

Kaz: *SIDETRACK CITY*: Kaz's best, from *Snake Eyes* and elsewhere. \$9.95

Joe Sacco: *PALESTINE VOL. 1 and 2*: Award-winning journalism in cartoon form. \$10.95 each

Joe Sacco: *WAR JUNKIE*: The Gulf War, a rock 'n' roll tour, the history of bombing, a major depression, and more from the creator of *Palestine*. \$16.95 each

Richard Sala: *BLACK CAT CROSSING*: Ninety-six-page collection (including eight pages in color) from *RAW*, *Blab*, *Drawn & Quarterly*, and elsewhere, by the creator of "The Chuckling Whatzit." \$10.95

Spain: *MY TRUE STORY*: Autobiography and historical fiction from one of the undergrounds' masters. \$14.95

Spain: *TRASHMAN LIVES!*: Underground super-hero lives again in this fine collection of violent agit-prop. \$14.95

Henriette Valium: *PRIMITIVE CRETIN #1*: Big, ACME-sized collection of outrageous strips from the lunatic Quebec cartoonist. \$8.95

Skip Williamson: *THE SCUM ALSO RISES*: Snappy Sammy Smoot and more; includes startlingly gorgeous full-color section, and many funny strips from undergrounds' golden age. \$14.95

Max White: *VILLA OF THE MYSTERIES #1-2*: Texas noir runs rampant in these two issues. \$3.95 each

zERO zERO BACK ISSUES

ZERO ZERO #1 (March/April 1995):

Big debut issue, featuring Ted Stearns' "Fuzz and Pluck," "The Man With the Big Head" by David Holzman, Frank Stack's "New Adventures of Jesus," plus Pat Moriarty and Charles Bukowski, Max Andersson, Glenn Head, Henriette Valium, the first Collier strip, and a Panther cover. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #2 (May/June 1995):

Every issue from here on features "The Chuckling Whatzit" by Richard Sala. Also, Mack White's "Homunculus," "Car-Boy" by Max Andersson, new "Trashman" story by Spain, David Mazzucchelli, Mats!?, and more. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #3 (July 1995):

ZZ debuts from Skip Williamson and Rick Altergott. Max Andersson's "Lolita," plus Mark Newgardner, "Fuzz and Pluck," and a cover by Henriette Valium. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #4 (August 1995):

"Meat Box" by Kaz and Georarakis premieres, plus Carol Tyler, Max Andersson, Mark Beyer, a Ted Stearns "dream" story, and Al Columbia's notorious "I Was Killing When Killing Wan't Cool." \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #5 (Sept./Oct. 1995):

Joe Coleman cover! Chris Ware frontispiece! Justin Green back cover! Plus Kim Deitch, extra-long Andersson Car-Boy story, "Meat Box," and *Homunculus*. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #6 (Nov./Dec. 1995):

Kim Deitch premieres "The Strange Secret of Molly O'Dare" I Plus "Fuzz and Pluck," Skip Williamson, Penny Van Horn, and Rick Altergott. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #7 (Jan./Feb. 1996):

"Molly O'Dare" continues! 18-page "Best World" cover story by Bill Griffith! Plus Max Andersson, Gilbert Hernandez, Archer Prewitt, and more. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #8 (March/April 1996):

Extra-long anniversary issue, with 2-color "Soft Boy" story by Archer Prewitt. Al Columbia, the end of "Molly O'Dare," Henriette Valium, "Homunculus" and "Fuzz and Pluck," and a cover by Charles Burns. \$5.95

ZERO ZERO #9 (May/June 1996): Snappy Sammy Smoot returns in a new story and cover by Skip Williamson! Sam Henderson and Stephane Blanquet lose their ZZ cherries, the first story by Susan Catherine and Oscar Zarate, and a Valium back cover. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #10 (July 1996):

Ultra-groovy Drew Friedman cover! Eight Henriette Valium strips! A "Monroe" story by Sam Henderson! Plus Max Andersson, Aleksandar Zograf, Jeff Johnson, more! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #11 (August 1996):

Dave Cooper's "Suckle" (which will run from #11 to #16 and #18 to #20) premieres! Plus Ted Stearns, Kaz, David Mazzucchelli, Max Andersson, and Roy Tompkins. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #12 (Sept./Oct. 1996):

Max Andersson's 16-page "Death," his biggest story since *Pizz!* P. Reves and Joakim Pirinen make their ZZ debuts, plus Michael Dougan and a back cover by Dan Clowes. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #13 (Nov./Dec. 1996):

Extra-long "Fuzz and Pluck" chapter, plus Sam Henderson, Skip Williamson, "Homunculus," Idiotland by Doug Allen, and Jim Blanchard! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #14 (Jan./Feb. 1997):

Stephane Blanquet cover, plus two, count 'em two, "Silent Stories"! Also, Mike Diana, Terry LaBan, and a Kim Deitch back cover. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #15 (March 1997):

Joe Sacco heads for Bosnia with 15-page "Christmas With Karadzic," first major story since *Palestine*! Plus Reves, Valium, Henderson, Columbia, and the serials. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #16 (April/May 1997):

Big of "Brute of an anniversary issue, with a full-color "Jimmy Corrigan" story by Chris Ware, striking 2-color stories by Al Columbia ("Blood Clot Boy") and Henriette Valium ("The Man in the Sewer"), a new chapter of "MeatBox," plus Joakim Pirinen, Penny Van Horn, Skip Williamson, P. Reves, Aleksandar Zograf, Kyratene Kyratene, and a cover by Kaz. \$5.95

ZERO ZERO #17 (June 1997):

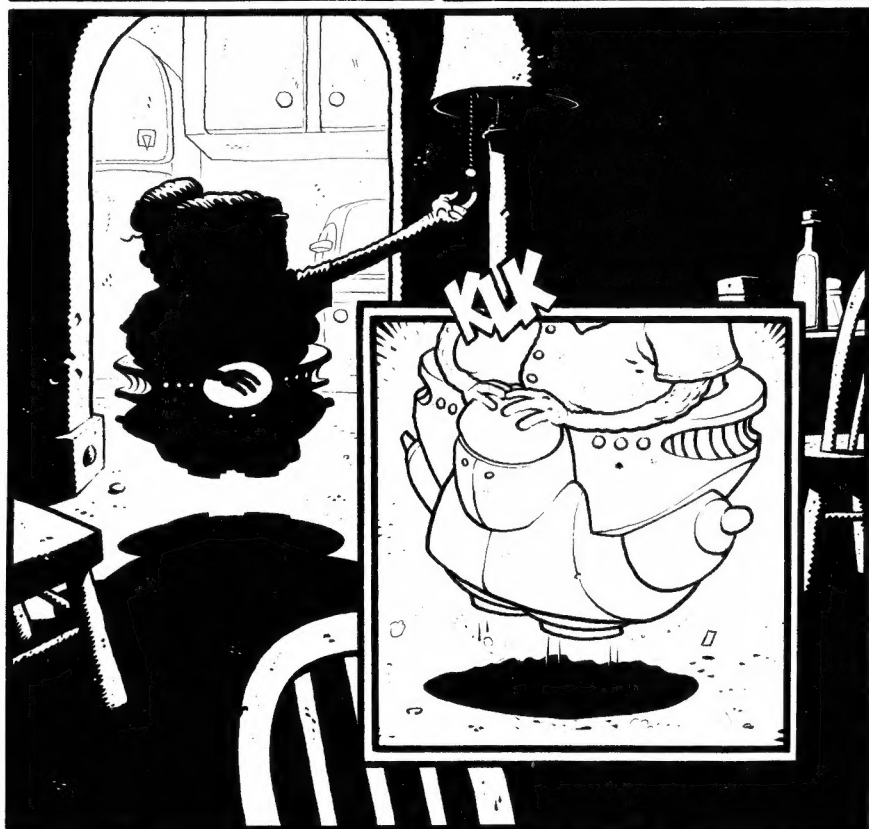
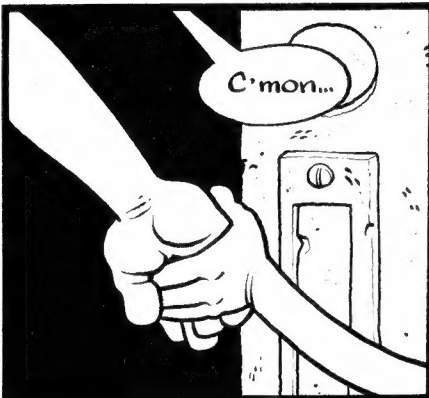
Michael Dougan's terrifying "Doubled Booked"! Penultimate "Chuckling Whatzit," new "Fuzz and Pluck" chapter, and more! \$3.95

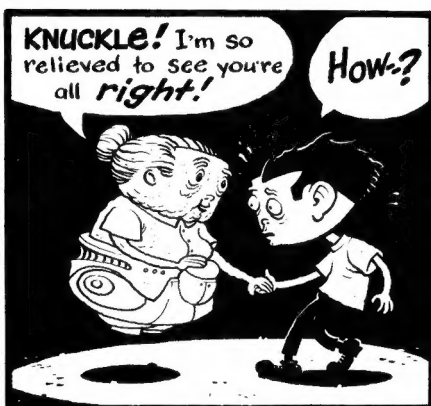
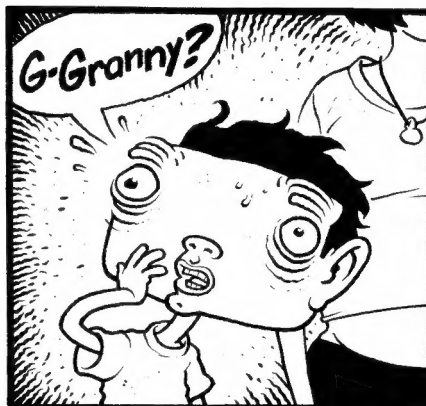
ZERO ZERO #18 (July 1997):

Especially lame Sam Henderson cover story! "Young Jeffrey Dahmer" by Derf! Plus J.R. Williams, M.L. Teague, Archer Prewitt, and Walt Holcombe! \$3.95

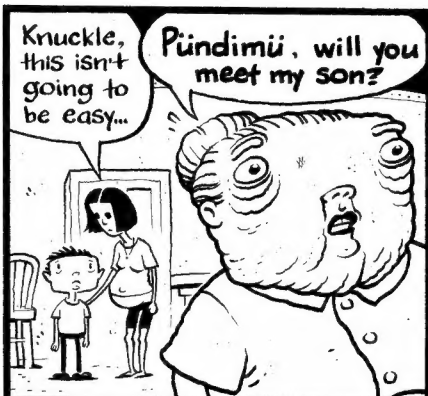
oRDING INFO

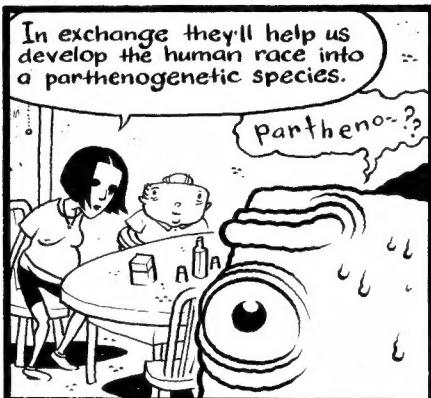
Please add \$1.00 per item shipping and handling (on four or more items, total shipping charge is only \$4.00!). Send all orders to "zERO zERO BOOKSHELF," c/o Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115, or call 1-800-657-1100 if you're ordering with a Visa or MasterCard. Allow four to six weeks for your order to arrive (more if you don't live in the U.S.).

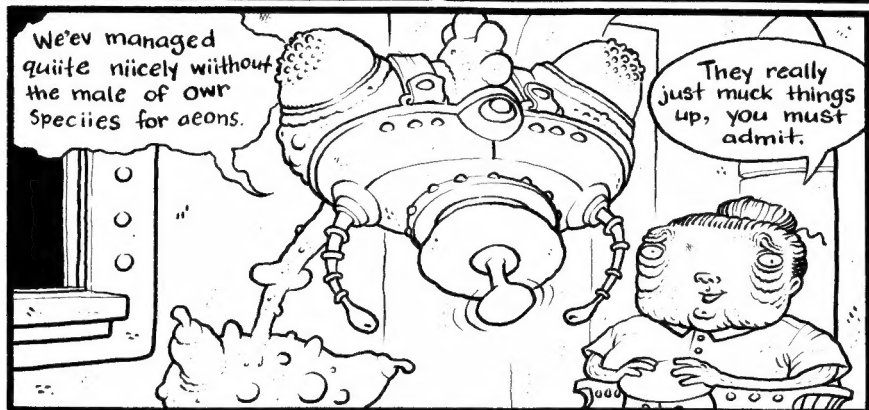


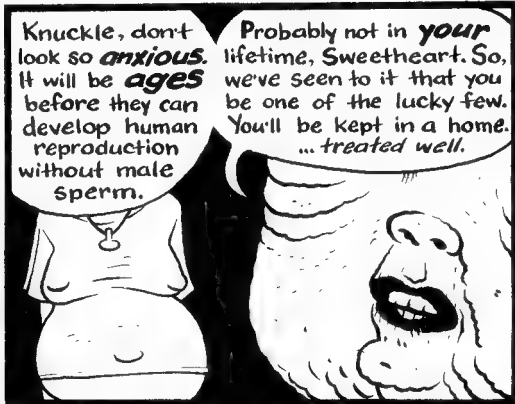


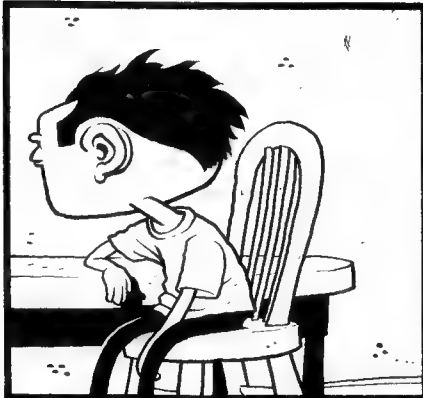








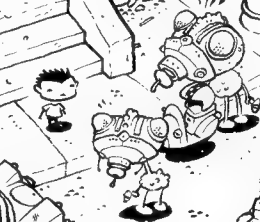
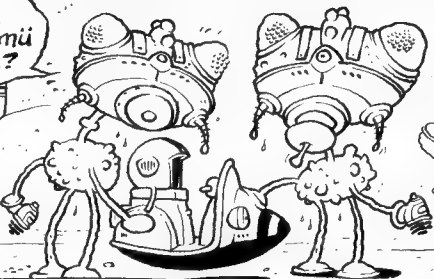




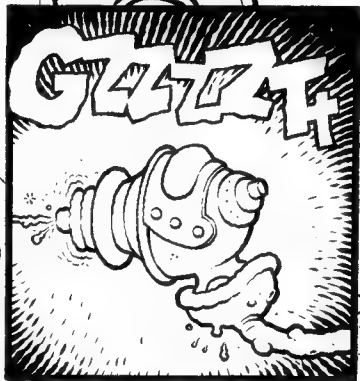


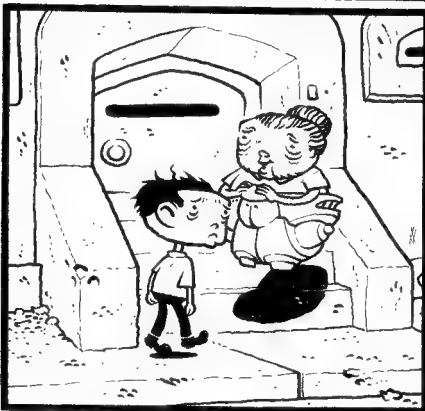
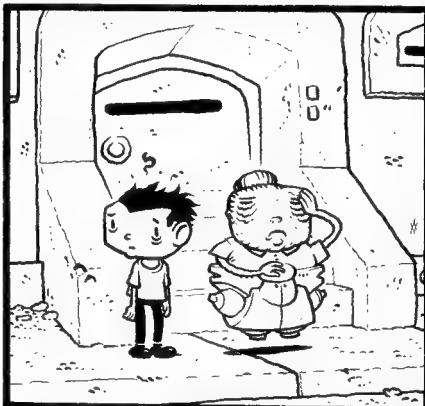
Pletrü
const mü
greh?

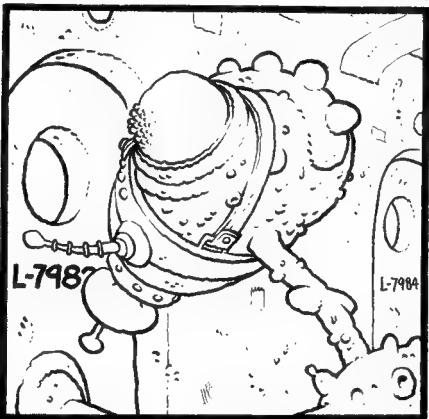
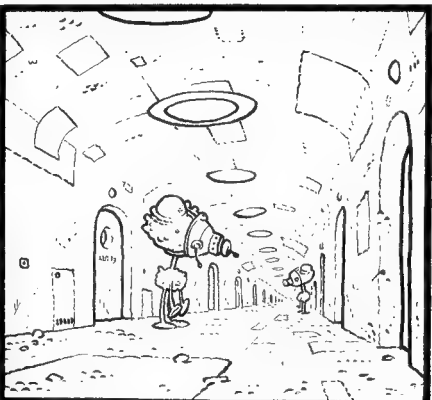
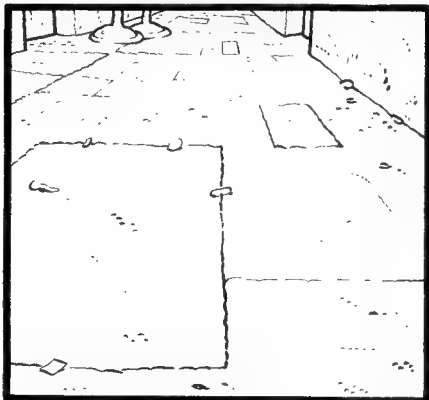
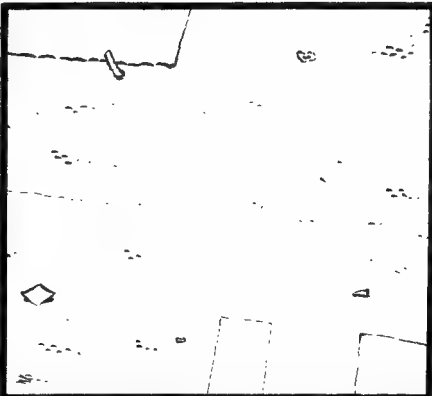
MIGL!

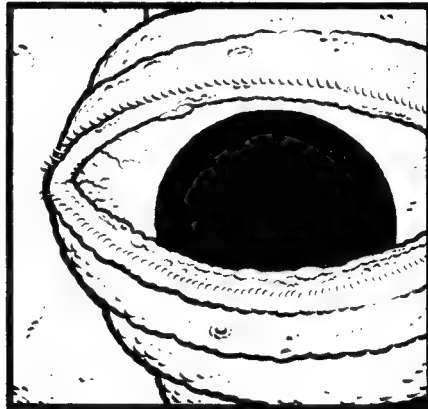
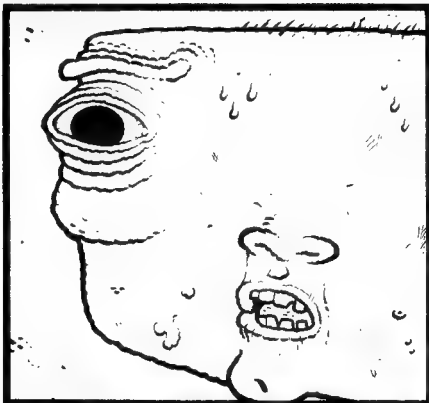
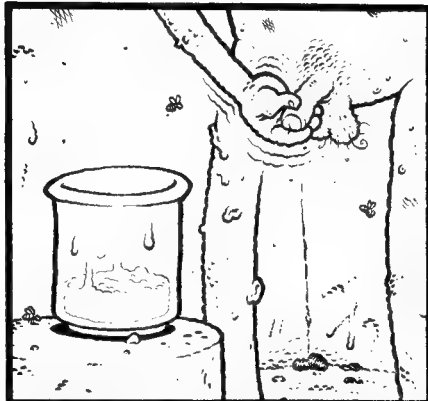


NO!







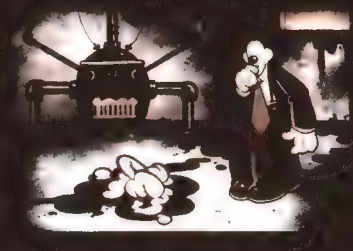


AMNESIA

AL COLUMBIA 1917

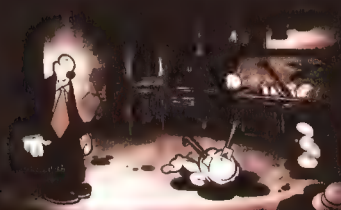
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN of the jury, allow me to introduce Mr. Seymour Sunshine: he is a victim of *amnesia*.

He does not know how or why he's come to have amnesia, indeed, he's not even aware that such a condition exists, or that he, Mr. Sunshine, is in fact a victim of it.



But, you may laugh, but consider this: only a moment before, I was passing merrily along in full possession of my faculties, quite bright, and highly self-satisfied with my talents and respectability. I was clever, witty, readily effusive as a speaker, and quite fond of saying so.

Then, I knew that my enjoyment of life was based on false beliefs and hopes, a state of 'illusory happiness' if you will; I was seldom troubled by my shortcomings so I was certain that God had granted me the luxury of a long, long life in which I, Mr. Sunshine, would be given ample time to correct those





12. "O GOOD! You're HOME! Home, I thought you were gone!"
"HICKERLOCK on me!"



Despite having absolutely no idea who his visitor might be, Mr. Sunshine nevertheless found himself strolling amiably by his side. Fearing that any uncertainty or hesitation on his part would be perceived as a blunder in manners or conduct, Mr. Sunshine simply went along with it all; he reckoned this would save him the perfect embarrassment of being mistaken for somebody who wasn't 100% sure of him self, that is to say, someone lacking full control of his wits, someone weak-willed, someone stupid





Now, to be true, the prospect of a dubious mission had initially lifted Seymour's spirits a bit. However, the foreign landscapes and shifting backdrops only served to increase his bewilderment and the invidious feeling that his bewilderment was somehow *very closely* associated with his present activity, an activity the likes of which he couldn't properly define or recall, leaving him overwhelmed with the intense spiritual dissatisfaction of having perpetrated a folly of ridiculous proportions.

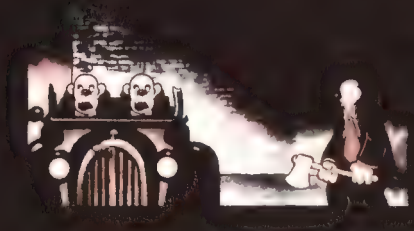
He felt as one might feel after having dry-humped a statue of the Virgin Mary and then gone on to maliciously deface an image of Christ with his own shit.



He was fearful he'd violated an unwritten law, of the highest order; though he had done nothing wrong, he was convinced that his every step was an impropriety akin to murder or burglary.



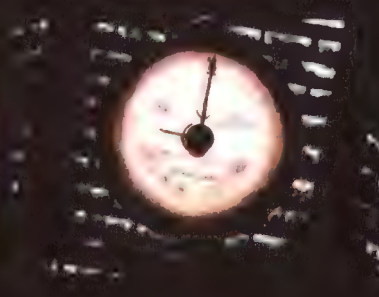
At any rate he felt like a real jack-ass, being not only foolish but dull and vacant in mind.

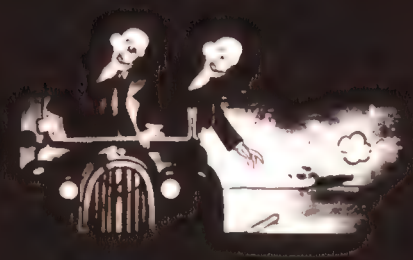


as of a person hopelessly addicted to some pernicious habit.



the object, or stamp collecting.





11. Occasionally, a sudden and very absurd blast of dramatic lighting would expose and track Seymour's movements, forcing him to adopt the loping and unflattering gait of his pursuants.

So avoid at all costs being mistaken for human, you see.



12. As it usually the case when being chased by a pack of rabid animals, our heroes gradually lost their powers of reasoning until they fell to an awkward slow-motion trot. However, when considerable doubt and hesitation that were all still left a pang of conscience.

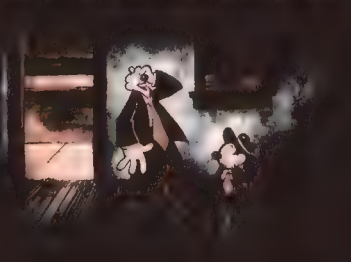




It was precisely at this moment of
reprieve that Mr Sunshine's memory restored itself
with intoxicating clarity. He sprang to his feet and
began smooching his little comrade, finally recognizing
him to be longtime side-kick Knishkebbible the
Monkey Boy childhood loon for mischievous and filthy
pleasures.

47. "It was precisely at this moment of reprieve that Mr Sunshine's memory restored itself with intoxicating clarity. He sprang to his feet and began smooching his little comrade, finally recognizing him to be longtime side-kick Knishkebbible the Monkey Boy childhood loon for mischievous and filthy pleasures."

48. "It was precisely at this moment of reprieve that Mr Sunshine's memory restored itself with intoxicating clarity. He sprang to his feet and began smooching his little comrade, finally recognizing him to be longtime side-kick Knishkebbible the Monkey Boy childhood loon for mischievous and filthy pleasures."



49. "Heaven, yes! These ghouls are merely FIGMENTS of our own UNFETTERED and can cause us no physical harm! Only mental havoc! He-he-he! We've absolutely nothing to fear! Watch! I'll show you!"

50. "Heaven, yes! These ghouls are merely FIGMENTS of our own UNFETTERED and can cause us no physical harm! Only mental havoc! He-he-he! We've absolutely nothing to fear! Watch! I'll show you!"

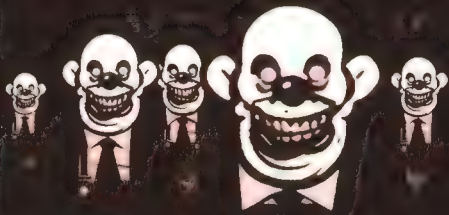


51. "Yes, yes! YOU change! I'd like to have a word with the White Wolf, too!"

52. "Ah-hem. Very good, very good! Everyone can hear us? Excellent! Well, let me start by saying that you can wipe those ghastly smiles off your faces because my days as your little bitch-boy are OVER! That's right! The jig is UP!"



"Ho-ho-ho! Yes indeed! For I've just realized that all of you, while seemingly three dimensional and quite menacing, are actually just a machination of mine gone haywire, a freakish by-product of my imagination!

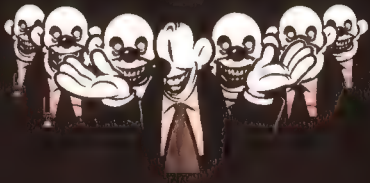


"Now you, Captain, you are my bond-slaves
and my personal and happy resolution.



"Indeed, there's really no reason we couldn't maintain a profitable co-
operation as master and slave. We could have a jolly good time if we
combined our energies in a united manner, under one banner, one voice.

"Together, gentlemen, we could work miracles! Maybe even rule
the world! If we could somehow bend all nations to our own
dominant will, then each of you in turn would become kings of
your own right! You too could have subjects and servants
and slaves and be called LORDS!"



"Hehe! How'd you like *them* apples, eh?"



T H E E N D

Maxwell and the Mechanical Rides

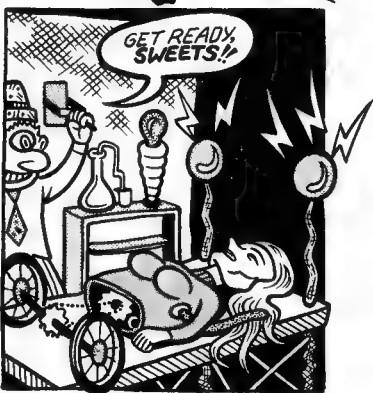


OUR STORY BEGINS ON WHAT MAX HOPES IS HIS LAST DAY...

JUST AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT....

MAX SPIES A BIG BILL-BOARD OUT THE WINDOW...







-I BREATHE!



WHEEE! YOU GALS'RE TH' MOST FUN A GUY EVER HAD!



YOU TREAT US PRETTY GOOD, MAX!

Aww...

REALLY... YOU'D NEVER GUESS WE WERE JUST TOTALLED LAST WEEK AT TH' LIVE-SEX DEMOLITION DERBY!!

OUR LOT IN LIFE... AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF REPAIR AND DESTRUCTION FOR THE VOYUERISTIC PLEASURE OF THE MALE GAZE!

DAYS END... THOSE POOR WIMMEN-THEY GOT IT ROUGH!

-BUT WHAT CN I DO? LEAST I GOT MY WEEKLY PAYCHECK...



-YOU WERE?



'TIL WE BREAK DOWN COMPLETELY!



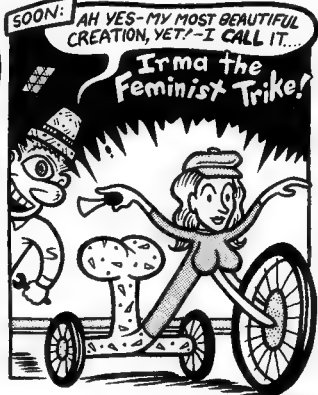
sex

OH WELL...



HEY MAX, GOT SOME NEW PARTS IN THIS WEEK... SOME GOOD RAW MATERIAL HERE. GO T'TOWN ON IT!!

OKAY!!



SOON: AH YES-MY MOST BEAUTIFUL CREATION, YET?-I CALL IT...

I'ma the Feminist Trike!

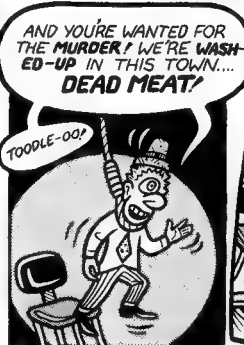
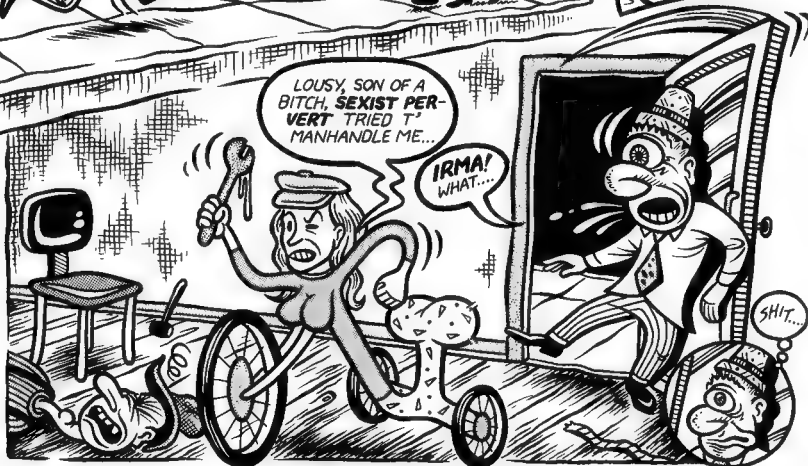


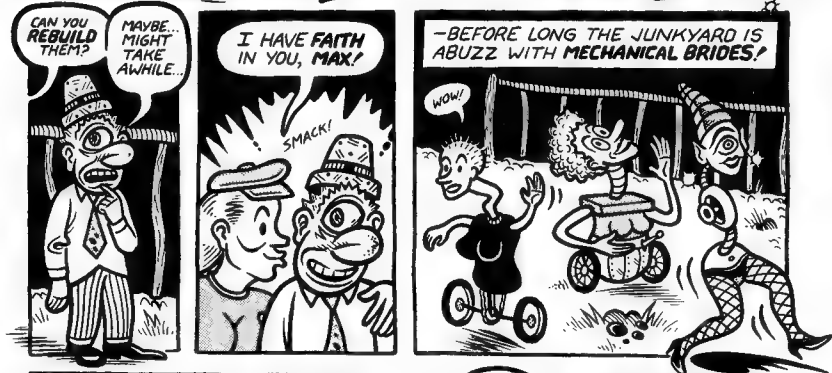
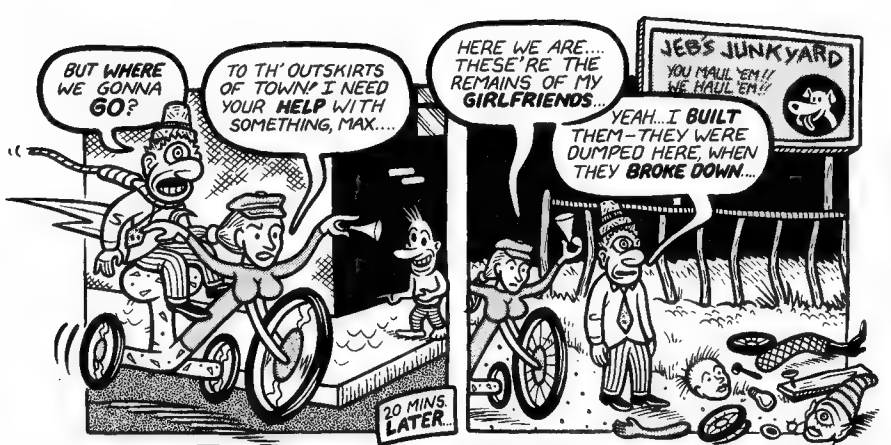
-GREAT JOB, MAX! THE BOYS'LL REALLY HAVE A BLAST TAKIN' THIS ONE APART!

YOU GOT A BONUS COMIN', MAX!

UH BOSS I WAS WONDERING...







AND SO....A BRIGHT NEW LIFE AND A NEW TOWN FOR THE NEWLYWEDS!



IRMA GETS A JOB AT A RAPE CRISIS CENTER....

I CARRY A SLEDGEHAMMER IN MY PURSE?



AND MAX TAKES A MECHANICS GIG AT A LOCAL GARAGE....



THEY DO THEIR BEST TO GET ALONG....

STOP TRYIN' T' FIX ME, MAX!

SORRY IRMA!

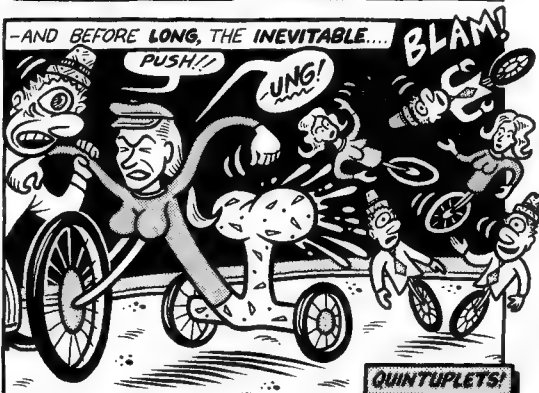


-AND BEFORE LONG, THE INEVITABLE....

PUSH!!

UNG!

BLAM!



ALL IN ALL, IT'S A PRETTY GOOD LIFE FOR BOTH OF THEM — OF COURSE,....

THEIR DIAPERS NEED CHANGING, MAX....

IN A MINUTE, HONEY...

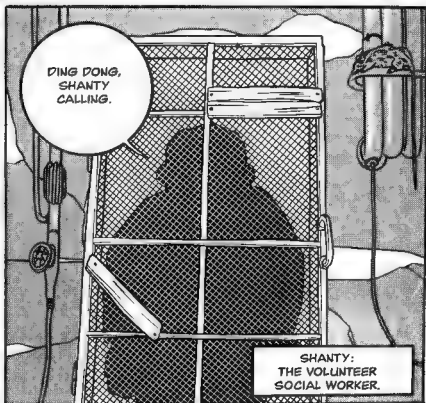
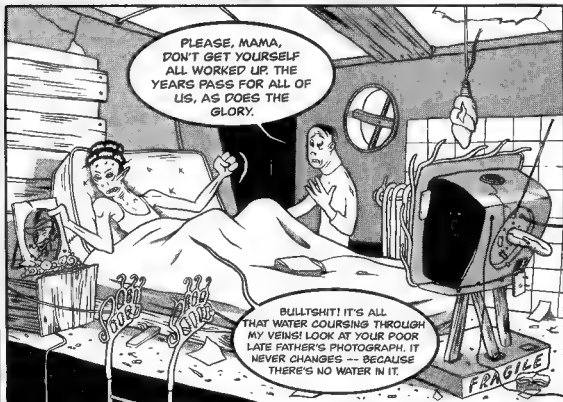
NG!

OW!



MARRIED LIFE CAN BE A BIT OF A DRAG, SOMETIMES.

END





SHANTY,
OF COURSE! THANK
GOD YOU'RE HERE --
I'M STARVING.

SNIFF
DON'T YOU EVER
AIR OUT THIS
PLACE?



(WHISPER)
DID YOU BRING THE
RECIPE WITH THE INGRE-
DIENTS FOR MOMMA'S
BIRTHDAY CAKE?

I'VE GOT
SOME DELI-
CIOUS BROTH
-- I'LL HEAT
IT UP.

WHAT
ARE YOU TWO
PLOTTING? THINK
YOU CAN FOOL ME
INTO CONSUMING ANY
OF THAT AQUEOUS
POISON? LIQUEFY
ME INTO AN EARLY
GRAVE?



JUDGE ME NOT,
ANTONIO. YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO WENT AND
DROWNED AND LEFT ME
ALL ALONE!

MY BEAUTIFUL
ALPINE SOLDIER! ONLY
YOU COULD EVER MAKE
ME FEEL LIKE A REAL
WOMAN!



SAINT CLELIA! LOOK
AT ALL THIS LEFTOVER
FOOD FROM WEEKS
PAST! PERHAPS THE
CATS WILL EAT IT...

DON'T YOU
DARE FEED THAT
OFFAL TO MY CAT!
CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S
JUST GIVEN BIRTH?
ARE YOU TRYING TO
TURN HER INTO A
BLOATED SACK OF
LARD -- LIKE
YOURSELF?



NOW LOOK,
SIGNORA, A CAT THAT'S
JUST DROPPED A LITTER
NEEDS TO EAT!

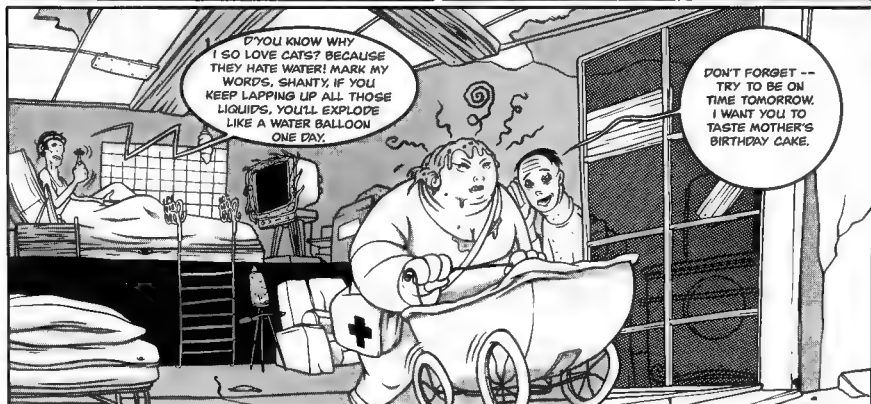
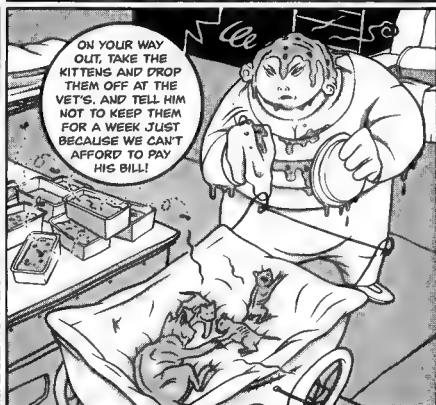
RRRIINA
RRRIINA



PREHEAT THE
OVEN TO 400°; PUT
IN THE BATTER
AND WAIT FOR IT
TO RISE.

THE SOUP
IS READY --
PIPING HOT.

DON'T
YOU SEE? LIQUIDS
CAUSE MY SKIN TO WRINKLE
AND MY ANKLES TO SWELL UP!
I MUST CLEANSE MY BODY
OF THESE WICKED FLUIDS
BEFORE THE PRODIGERS
COME KNOCKING!

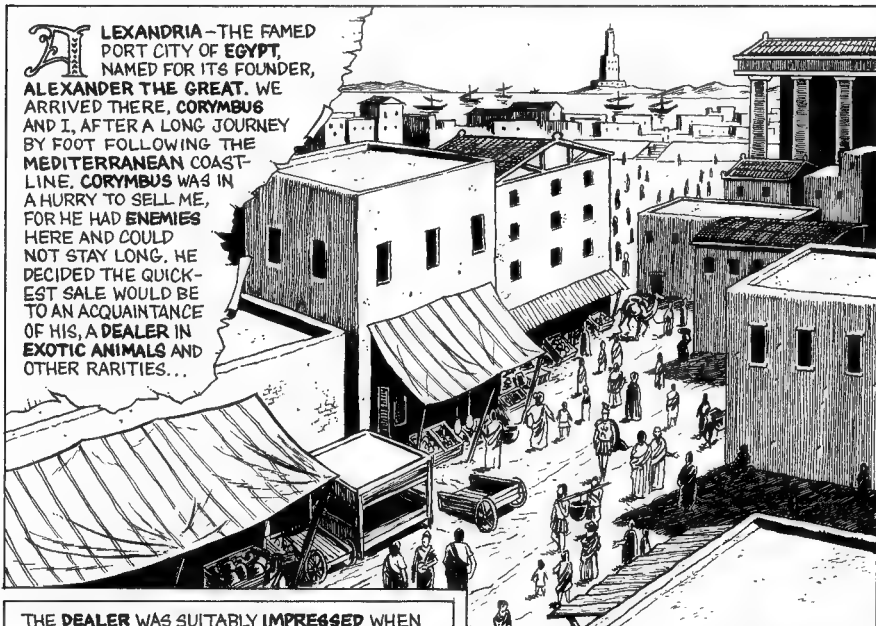




HOMUNCULVS: GLADIATOR

BY
MACK
WHITE

ALEXANDRIA—THE FAMED PORT CITY OF EGYPT, NAMED FOR ITS FOUNDER, ALEXANDER THE GREAT. WE ARRIVED THERE, CORYMBUS AND I, AFTER A LONG JOURNEY BY FOOT FOLLOWING THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST-LINE. CORYMBUS WAS IN A HURRY TO SELL ME, FOR HE HAD ENEMIES HERE AND COULD NOT STAY LONG. HE DECIDED THE QUICKEST SALE WOULD BE TO AN ACQUAINTANCE OF HIS, A DEALER IN EXOTIC ANIMALS AND OTHER RARITIES...



THE DEALER WAS SUITABLY IMPRESSED WHEN HE SAW ME...



I WAS QUICKLY SOLD AND PUT IN A CAGE SURROUNDED BY WILD BEASTS DESTINED FOR THE COLOSSEUMS. THEN I WAS SOLD AGAIN...



MY NEW OWNER WAS ONE LICINIUS MARULLUS, A WEALTHY ROMAN MERCHANT WHO LIVED IN A VILLA ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF ALEXANDRIA. HE BOUGHT ME AS A PET FOR HIS DAUGHTER...



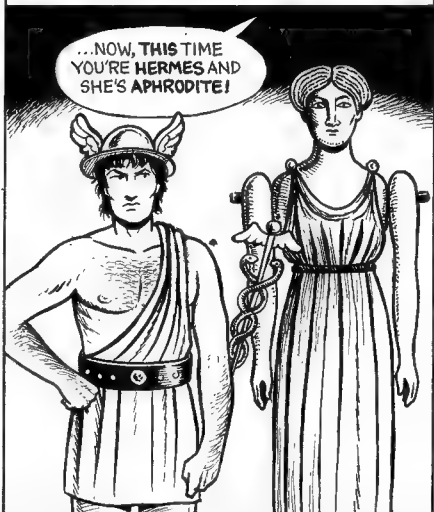
AT THAT MOMENT MARULLUS' SON, VARELIUS, WALKED UP AND ASKED...

CAN'T I HAVE ONE, FATHER?

NOW, SON, I GAVE YOU A MONKEY! IT WAS JUST YESTERDAY, IN FACT. IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT HE DROWNED!



AS PLAYTHING FOR YOUNG LYDIA MARULLUS, I WAS REQUIRED TO WEAR ALL MANNER OF SILLY DOLL COSTUME AND PARTICIPATE IN ENDLESS GAMES OF PRETEND...



BUT, BEFORE LONG, THE CHILD GREW **BORED** WITH ME, AND I WAS LEFT ALONE. I SPENT MY DAYS IN MY CELL, **DESPONDENT**. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE SHIPWRECK, I HAD TIME TO CONSIDER MY CIRCUMSTANCES. I **DESPAIRED** OF EVER FINDING MY **LOST TWIN** AND RESUMING THE LIFE OF A **GOD**. ESCAPE WOULD HAVE BEEN **EASY** ENOUGH, BUT I DOUBTED I COULD GET BACK HOME ON MY OWN...



THEN **VALERIUS** TOOK AN INTEREST IN ME, AFTER I HAD **LANGUISHED** IN MY CAGE FOR SEVERAL DAYS, HE SUDDENLY TOOK ME OUT AND PUT ME IN HIS **TOY CHARIOT**...



THE **CHARIOT RIDE** ENDED AT A **MINIATURE COLOSSEUM**—ANOTHER OF HIS MANY **TOYS**...



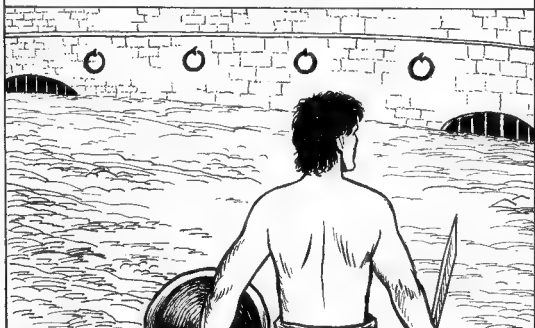
THE BOY GAVE ME A **NUDGE** AND
I **ENTERED** THE **COLOSSEUM**...



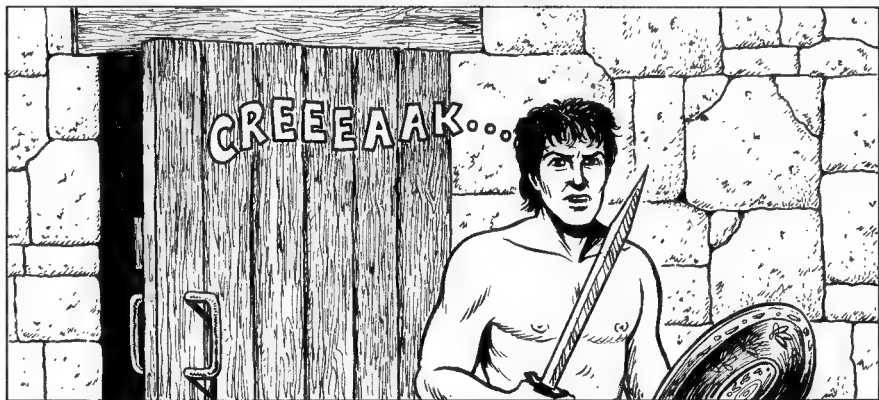
THE DOOR **SHUT** BEHIND ME AND
I **CROSSED** THE **ARENA**. ABOVE,
VALERIUS BRIEFLY **APPEARED**...



APPREHENSIVE, I **BEGAN** SLOWLY **BACKING UP**, LOOK-
ING AROUND IN **ALL** DIRECTIONS...



CRREEAAK...





AS THE CAT SQUEEZED THROUGH THE DOOR, I SUDDENLY DISCOVERED WITHIN MYSELF AN IMPULSE FOR **SELF-PRESERVATION** — I **BOLTED** ACROSS THE ARENA...





the Cosmonaut

